

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"In The Stillness" 9/6/23

*And God said, Go forth and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire, a still small voice, when Elijah heard it, he covered his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the door of the cave. And behold, there came a voice unto him, saying,
"What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:11-13)*

But I don't have time for stillness, I have to get to work. I have to start dinner. I have to clean the house before I can rest. I gotta run, I have a meeting at 2. I have a plane to catch. I have to get the kids quieted down first. I haven't packed yet. I need to run to town. I have to get this done before I can sit and be still. And we feel like we're in the midst of a great wind. Our home, office, car looks like it suffered an earthquake. We wish we could take this pile of papers out and set it on fire. Then I won't have to deal with it.

How do great people do it? How does anyone do great things? Can sitting still really be a part of a busy person's life? I don't have time to think about it, I've got so much to do today. My to-do list is a mile long. Now, I've gone from busy to lying, it's only a block long.

When you're frazzled has anyone ever told you to just breathe? Breathe. The Spirit of God is the breath of God. Not a hurricane, but a soft breeze. Breathe through the pain. Breathe to prepare yourself to lift the weight. Breathe out thanks. Breathe in. Breathe out. Be still in the midst of the mess.

I'm not preaching to you as someone who has this figured out. I live in the windstorm and in fear the fire. I am really shook and I find it difficult to sit still for this. But I am sharing this because of the truth in it. When we are still, in body and spirit, God can talk, and we can listen. We live in a world, in a day, in a situation which is unstill. It's understandable we are rushed and unsure. We're too busy fighting and flighting to be quiet and figuring out what is really going on and how it will truly affect us.

We tend to worry to death ideas, fears, what if's, plans, and it could've beens instead of calmly looking at them. Sort it out. What is under your control goes is this pile. What is NOT under your control goes in the garbage. Now there's less paper to blow around in the wind, less stuff to waste time worrying about.

Have you ever said, "I'm so busy I can't see straight."? The Stoic, Epictetus, used this analogy: "The mind is like muddy water. To have clarity, we must be steady and let it settle down. Only then can we see. Only then do we have transparency." Be still. Be quiet. Breathe. Wait for it. Wait for the answer, the missing word, the next step, a clear vision of the end product. There, in the stillness, is God is, asking what is bothering you.

Please pray with me:

God of the tempest, may our feet, our hands, and our hearts be still before You. Help us to find life in Your breath and to quiet ourselves before You. May we make time to be still before You so we can hear You speak to us, teach us, correct us, bless us, use us to reflect Your love to others. Thank You for the peace which can come from only You and comes even in our storms.

Amen.